Long X Bridge Contract Awarded

Replacement to be Open by July 2021

This historic Long X Bridge on US Highway 85 south of Watford City will soon be replaced with a new bridge. Work on the new Little Missouri River crossing is scheduled for completion in July 2021.

The ND Department of Transportation last week awarded a bid to Ames Construction to build the new bridge and dismantle the old one. Ames, based in Burnsville, MN, was the only bidder on the project. Its $33,971,510 bid was more than $6 million over the engineer’s estimate.

The company will begin mobilizing on the site in July and work is expected to begin in August, according to Bill Gathman, assistant district engineer for DOT’s Williston District. Gathman said the next step in getting the project started will be a pre-construction conference.

Replacing the old truss bridge with a newer design will allow it to better accommodate oversize truck traffic. It’s vertical clearance is just over 16 feet, so it’s no surprise as Gathman says that “it’s been hit a few times in the last few years.”

The new bridge, to be built east of the current structure, will be four lanes wide in anticipation of future construction that will widen other segments of Highway 85 between Watford City and Belfield. DOT had an eight-page handout from public hearings held last spring on the multi-part project.

Because the Long X Bridge is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, federal law requires it be made available for adoption prior to its removal. Emmons County rancher Paul Silbernagel will do that with the southern span of the bridge, which is about 250 feet in length. Silbernagel plans to reassemble it on his ranch east of Linton where it will span Beaver Creek. The bridge will be on private property, but it should be visible from Highway 13.